

IDAHO LOGGING SAFETY NEWS



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WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

By David Kludt

What a fall!!! It's been a while since I can remember everybody working through October without a day lost for weather. I assume that by the time this letter comes out, however, that will not be the case. Each day I can see that white stuff coming a little lower when I look off into the mountains.

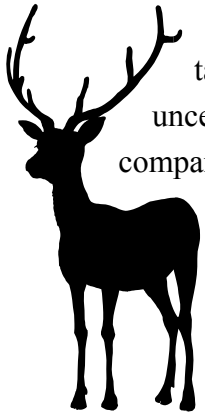
It seems that each fall as the logging season winds down, we have an increase in accidents. Apparently this fall has been no exception. Not only did we see the "usual" increase in accidents, we also experienced our first

logging fatality for the year when a skidder operator was killed in Southern Idaho. I don't know if everybody starts thinking about layoff, we get elk fever, or everybody just seems to get tired out but this has been happening for quite a few years.



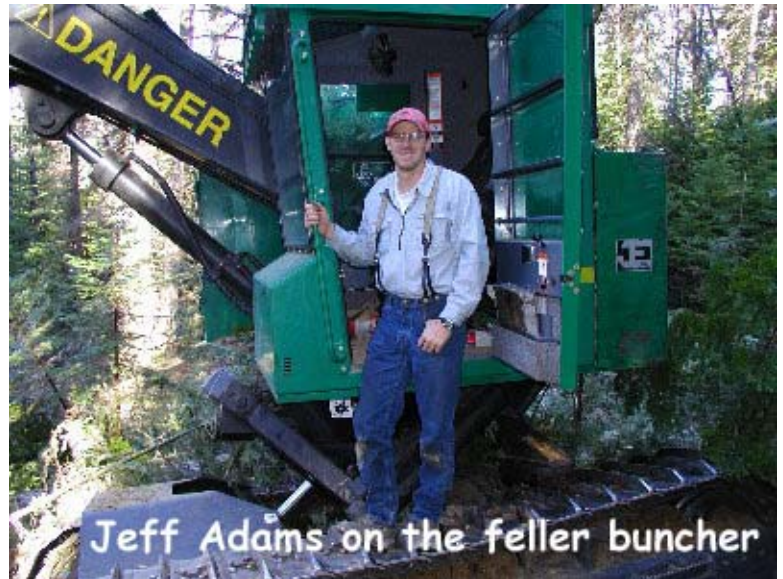
As winter logging starts to loom into the picture, everybody needs to think about the differences that the weather will make. Slick roads, damp-miserable weather causing people to cut corners, emergency rescue procedures being greatly hampered, and machinery acting completely different on ice than on dry ground are just a few of the things that need to be considered. That white stuff has a tendency to hide hazards both in the trees and on the ground. The good news, or so I'm told, is that five feet of snow is much more forgiving when you have a tree on top of you! ***Have a good, safe winter.***

Elk Mountain Logging



As I travel around the country talking to loggers there is a lot of uncertainty with many of the companies. Refreshingly, I have a logging outfit in my area that seems to have everything going their way. Elk Mountain Logging out of Grangeville is really taking off. Jeff Adams

and his dad, Darrell Adams, started an outfit about four years ago and they feel that the future is there for the ambitious. With a new feller buncher, a new slide boom processor, a new grapple skidder and a couple of years work lined up, they obviously feel there is a future in logging. Although Jeff has only been at this a few years, Darrell has been around the game for over 40 years and has seen it all.



Darrell Adams (left) gets to do whatever it takes to keep the job going and Mark Jay operates the processor

Elk Mountain does an excellent job of logging and it would appear that they have adapted to the logging style of the future.



WINTER & SIGNS DON'T MIX


Kludt mentioned in one of his articles last newsletter that it seems like when you guys get to doing some of this safety stuff we ask of you, we ask you to do a little more. Well, this probably goes in the same folder.



With winter coming on, this is just a reminder to keep the snow off the signs the best you can. I know this is a pain, especially along the

roads the snow plows run, but those “trucks entering roadway” signs are important. Even though it is obvious that most of the snowmobilers go too fast to read them, I suppose those “log trucks” and “logging ahead” signs are also important.

You loggers have done a heck of a good job with the signs on your logging jobs warning the general public of everything from “falling timber” to “UFO’s ahead” (North Idaho, don’t ask).



Accident

A log truck driver lost one finger and smashed two other ones while wrapping up a load. He was holding the wrappers in the bucket of the loader and apparently wasn’t in the clear when the signal was given to clinch the bucket. He is still recovering from the accident.

NEAR MISSES



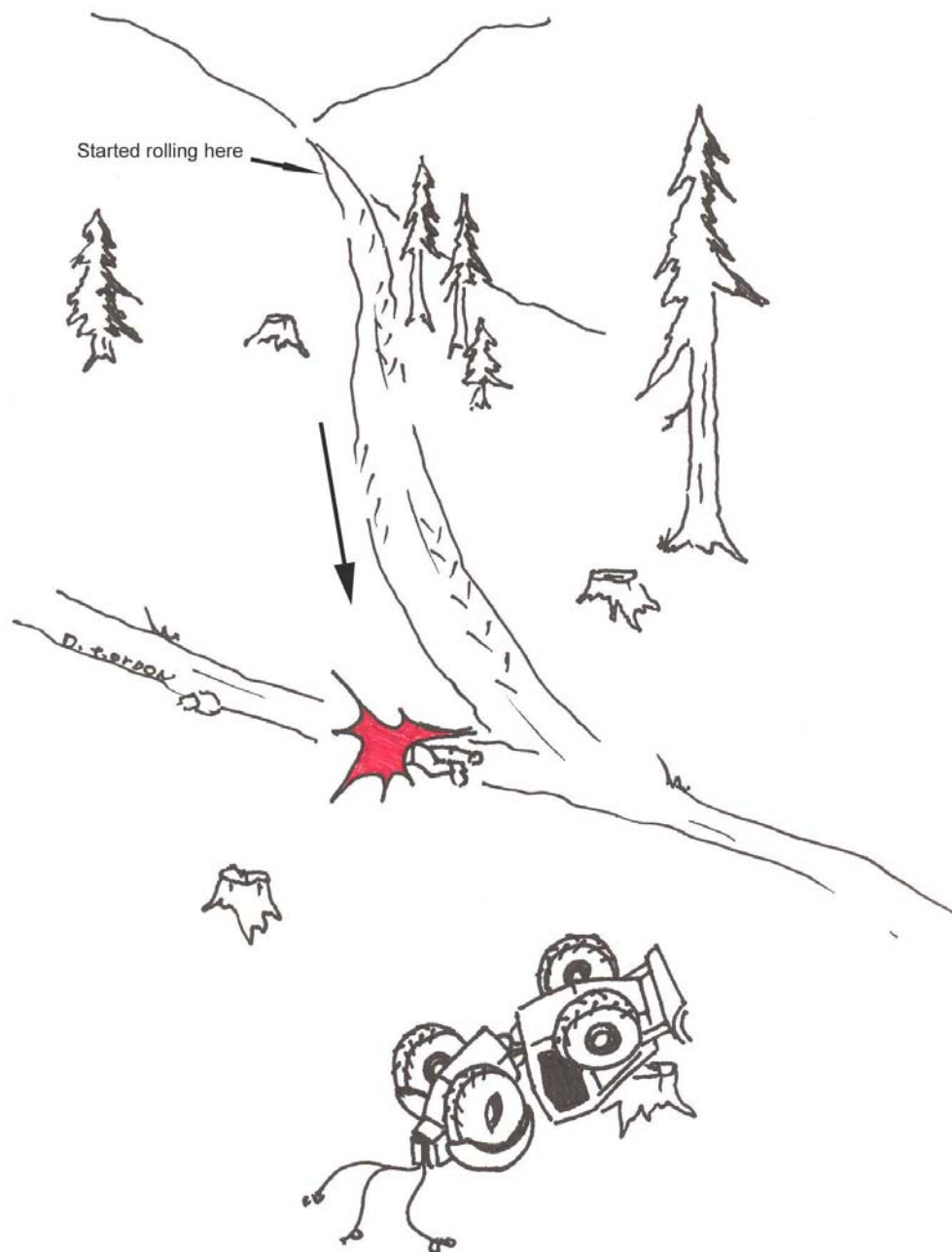
(1) A logger in my area was telling me why he doesn’t fall trees any more. He was falling some big Doug fir that had recently died, although the limbs still had some green needles. He didn’t realize just how brittle the wood was. He fell a big one alongside of another tree. The branches bent the top over and suddenly it broke and came back at him. The broken top was about thirty feet long but luckily he was able to get out of the way. The bad news was that it completely smashed his saw. This incident made him realize just how vulnerable he was and that’s when he made the decision to become a landing sawyer.

(2) An operator of a Thunderbird swing yarder narrowly escaped serious injury when the guy lines failed and the machine went off the road and over the hill. The cab of the yarder was smashed severely but extra guarding that had been added around the cab probably saved the logger’s life. The machine was tied back with two inch and 1/8 cables which should have been more than sufficient. Luckily, the yarder operator received only minor cuts and bruises. The machine was not so lucky. It will take thousands of dollars to put it back into running shape.

The machine appeared to have been properly guyed and the guy lines, which were replaced at the start of the summer, showed no visible signs of wear.

FATALITY OCTOBER 2002

An experienced rubber tire skidder operator was killed when the machine he was operating tipped over, rolling several times down the hill. Stumps on the uphill side or a dip on the down hill side may have caused the skidder to roll.



Mason Logging

By Don Hull

Mason Logging is a family logging operation founded by Ron Mason around 1975. They log mostly for Inland Empire Paper Company. Ron and his boys have put together a very

successful logging outfit. They have excellent equipment and are capable of logging any type of ground skidding you can think of and be efficient at it. I have known Ron since the mid sixties. At that time, he was a timber faller and was partnered up with Jim Schreiber ~ what a pair. I've known his kids from the time they could barely walk. They have all grown up to be people that Ron and his wife can be proud of.

I need to tell a little story about when I first started doing safety for the state. Ron called me up one evening and asked if I would come



up on his job and work with Ron Jr. since he was just learning how to fall timber. Ron said that junior had a hard head and he couldn't seem to get him to listen like he thought he should. I felt really good that Ron had enough confidence in my ability to trust me with training his son so I said I would be there bright and early the next morning.

The morning started out great and Young Ron was doing everything pretty well. They were in some small tamarack that was easy to get on the ground. All of a sudden one set back hard on his bar. Well, I told him there were a couple of ways to get the tree down. We could take the bar off and let it go over backwards or we could get another saw. Ronnie got



Jim standing on the deck while Ron Sr. talks safety to Bob Lane (trucker), and Mike Derr-landing sawyer

the other saw and I proceeded to raise up about eighteen

inches and put another under cut the other way. That's when things started to go awry. The darn thing split and dropped on his saw causing major damage. Since my brother Butch worked at the saw shop, I took the saw in and told him to fix it and charge it to me. I went back to pick it up a couple of days later and Butch said Ron Sr. had picked it up already and paid for it. Ron maintained that it was a good lesson showing young Ron just how easy bad things could happen ~ and nobody got hurt! It was a great start to my logging safety career.



WRAPPER REMINDER

By Galen Hamilton

In most cases the woods boss sees the front of the trucks coming into the landing and the back of them leaving, and that is about it for having much contact with them. I think the bosses take it for granted that the drivers are handling the wrapping up chores the way they told them to ~ most of the time they are, but sometimes not. I have heard and seen enough examples of “cutting corners” lately that I thought it was worth reminding the bosses and owners to go over their “wrapping up” policies with the truck drivers.

Due to many reasons, wrapping up a truck completely in a tight loading area may be a very dangerous practice. By traveling a **SHORT** distance this task can be completed safely. Five miles out from the loader is not a **SHORT** distance! Maybe the first wide spot would be a good choice.

Most mills in Idaho require the legal amount of wrappers on a long log load (3) to get unloaded, but there are still a few that don't. Since a driver can get away with just using 1 or 2 wrappers, they do. I have an idea however, that if something ever went wrong and the load was not secured correctly according to the rule book, there would be a big can of worms to crawl through.

Reasons ranging from limited hoisting ability, crooked timber or log quality, result in an abundance of short logs on the landings. The loader operators struggle to get them on the trucks and then the drivers are expected to bounce down off the hill and get them to the mill with everything in tact ~ kind of like wrapping up a bunch of water balloons. Maybe an extra wrapper in the bark box would come in handy.

Again, most of the drivers out there do an unbelievable job and deserve a big pat on the back from the boss. But while you bosses are patting, remind the drivers what your company policies are as far as wrapping up goes.



A timber faller broke his leg above the ankle when a small cedar he had just fell kicked back and landed on his foot. He fell the tree, used his escape route and suddenly the butt of the cedar was directly above him. Luckily, it was steep ground and gravity apparently carried the tree slightly down hill when it struck him on the backside before landing on his foot. The sawyer said there was a lot of blowdown in the area and what he thought was a broken out top in front of him was actually a small, green tree with some dead limbs.

After years and years of falling timber, “routine” might have been his downfall. He was so sure of what he was looking at that he didn't bother to go and check. He knew that the “broken out top” was going to be flattened by the tree he was falling. Since the accident happened late in the summer, he has taken up a new hobby ~ Road Hunting!

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THAT EQUIPMENT

By Galen Hamilton

Hopefully this picture turns out. This is the side of a boom on a feller buncher with a break running halfway across the face. When I drove up the mechanic was getting everything ready to plate it up and get it back to work. Even though I told him I could see clearly from the ground, he told me to climb up and take a CLOSE look at it. What was not so apparent were the very small stress cracks which eventually led to the larger break. He said these would be very hard to see during general maintenance, and in fact the operator of this particular machine did a good job of catching the break as soon as he did.

The mechanic got me thinking though. The point he made was

that if a person could catch some of those cracks and breaks when they first got started, they could fix it a whole lot cheaper than after it was laying in the road in 2 or 3 pieces. He also reminded me that by catching a break early, an accident might be prevented.

With the cold weather it might be a good time to have your operators look all the logging equipment over closely the next time they grease or change a line. It is tough with all the mud and crud covering the trucks, but those frames and bunks go through heck about a hundred times a day. Watching logging trucks going through some of those “driveable” dips makes me wonder why they just don’t twist in two.



Of course all of this is going to take a little extra time so I thought I would start working on a new law that would lengthen the day a few extra hours. I suggested this idea to that mechanic at about four o’ clock that afternoon since he had about seven hours of welding ahead of him. Geez, I didn’t know mechanics knew those kind of words!!

Brad Musser and **George Moyle** are currently falling for Croman Helicopter. Sometimes the old world seems pretty hectic going from one safety mess to another (most not coming from loggers). That is why it is a relief to stumble upon people like these two experienced sawyers every once in a while. They work over two tree lengths apart, communicate clearly between themselves and the bull buck throughout the day, wear all the safety gear, mark a slight safety concern clearly with danger ribbon for the skidding crew that follows, and all the while put a bunch of timber on the ground.



I asked how they manage to deal with all the safety stuff and still do their jobs? “You just do it. Not a big deal”. Why didn’t I think of that! **GOOD WORK GUYS**

FALLING SAFETY

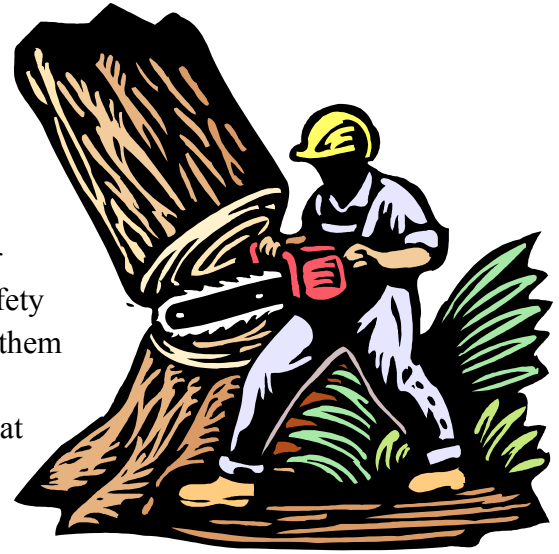
By Cliff Osborne

I was recently traveling up this river canyon when I noticed some movement on the hillside across the draw in some rock bluffs. I got my field glasses out and spotted what I thought at first was a billy goat. It had a white beard and white hair. After further study, I noticed it was wearing a hard hat and packing a chain saw. That's no goat ~ it's a crazy logger going after some timber on that hell forsaken ground. After several hours of driving I arrived on the site across the river where the sawyer was working. There were several pick-ups parked and sawyers started pouring out of the brush. Sure enough, one of them had a white beard. I introduced myself and commented on the rough strip he had just come off of. He said this kind of ground is normal for helicopter logging and sometimes when you are up there holding onto a bush trying to saw a tree down, it kind of makes your body parts pucker. He also commented that when you're cutting trees you better have your ducks in a row. You need to have an escape path figured out, look the tree over for unforeseen hazards, cut a clean undercut, follow the back cut with a wedge and leave a strip of holding wood all the way across the stump if possible. Use your escape route and hopefully you can always stay on the uphill side and avoid turning your back on a

falling tree.

The white headed logger said, "you, safety man, you tell them young bucks starting out that if they stay in this business long

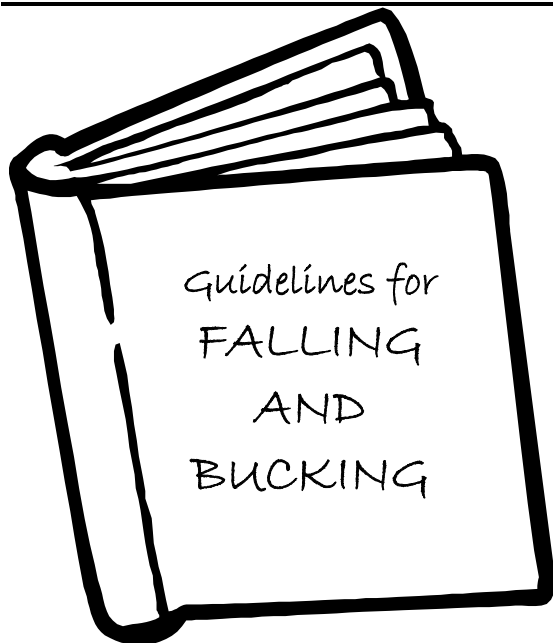
enough their body is going to take some abuse. Develop good work habits from the beginning and stay with them. Those short cuts usually end up getting you hurt!"



There have been rules developed for falling timber since the first tree was cut. These "guidelines" were reviewed by the Northwest logging safety personnel a number of years back and although nothing much has changed, it might be worth reviewing them from time to time to make sure that critical steps are not eliminated. **IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT WITH NEARLY EVERY FALLING ACCIDENT, ONE OR MORE OF THESE GUIDELINES WAS OMITTED!!** ~ See Guidelines for FALLING AND BUCKING ~ Page 9

ACCIDENT

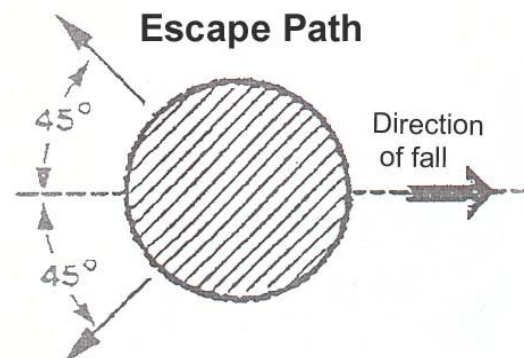
A fifty-one year old sawyer related to me an accident that happened earlier in the year. He said he didn't know whether things happened to him because he was older and couldn't make all of his body parts go in the right direction or what. He had jumped up on the end of a log and it started rolling. It threw him to the ground and then rolled up the back of his leg smacking his face into a vine maple. He was happy that he was still quick enough to react and not let the log roll completely over him. Luckily causing only some bruises and a bloody nose.



- When the tree lifts and is committed to fall, use your escape path and get behind another tree if possible. Watch the tree and neighboring trees as it starts to fall for any material being dislodged.

Keep watching for falling material, even after the tree has hit the ground. Neighboring trees that may have been touched will still be

swaying and may dislodge or throw material into the work area. Do not move to the stump of next tree until you have finished your safety check.



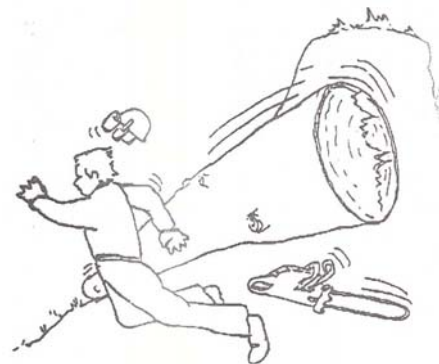
- AVOID domino falling, swing cuts and driving or wedging snags.

- Danger trees that will reach the work area should be fell as soon as an opening will permit it.

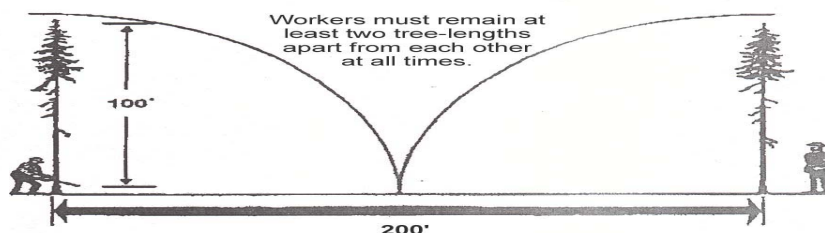
- Before bucking a log, look for: side bind, pivot points, elevated butts, and tops that could cause the log movement. Watch for limbs, saplings, or vine maple that could spring back when bucked off.

Always stand on the uphill side of the log.

- Trees left hung-up must be flagged or marked in some predetermined way to alert others of the hazard. DON'T work in the hazard area of a hung up tree!



- The distance between work areas must be at least twice the height of the trees being fell.



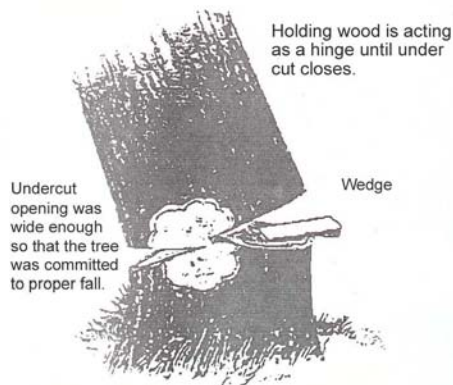
- Before starting to fall a tree, check for defects, loose limbs, leaners, etc. Ask for another cutter's help or advice with any question about the safe cutting or bucking of a tree or snag.

- Prepare your work area. Brush out around the base of the tree and cut away windfalls, logs or other debris that could be thrown by the fall tree.

- Choose and clear out an escape path in back of, uphill and at an angle away from the stump.

- The undercut should be level, with a depth of about one third the diameter and a height of at least one fifth the diameter. The two cuts that form the undercut must not cross where they meet because an unintentional Dutchman can cause a barberchair or cause the tree to fall in the wrong direction.

- The backcut should be level and above the hinge point of the undercut. Place wedge(s) when the bar is deep enough. Check corners often so you don't cut off a corner.



FEW MINUTES OF BLOCKING IS WORTH THE EFFORT

By Galen Hamilton

When I took this picture of **Randy Smith**, mechanic for J.I. Morgan Logging, I really didn't know how I was going to use it. I knew he had made quite an effort in blocking up this machine before working on it. He may have gotten away with completing the work without blocking the machine, but he went ahead and took the time of removing any chance of an accidental injury. Isn't that what this safety stuff is all about? But how could I prove his efforts were worth it?



The answer came in a phone call from north Idaho. Apparently that logging safety guru from CdA, Don Hull, was attempting to change the serpentine belt on his wife's van. To make a little more room under the van so he could see better, Don used the jack to lift the vehicle. He only lifted it a little ways, in fact the tires didn't leave the ground, just a few inches so he could slide under the van easily.

You guessed it, the jack kicked out. Now Don is an old timber faller and about as tough as they come but he did say, "Galen, that kind of hurt". Oh, no kidding. It broke out a couple of teeth, smashed his nose and bruised the heck out of his jaw. He also mentioned that the first thing he saw as he was crawling out from under the rig were two jack stands about ten feet away. As I said earlier, Don is an old faller and since the vehicles impact was directly on his head, we shouldn't see any change in his future behavior.

The next time there are four empty trucks in the turn around, the landing is full of logs, the sawmill forester wants to have a meeting and the loader breaks down, take that extra twenty minutes to block it up before crawling underneath. Donny says it is worth the effort, and after all, he is a safety guru!



One last thing, after my article in the last newsletter came out about me falling down and stabbing myself with a stick, I received quite a bit of flack. Much of it came from certain individuals in north Idaho. They even went so far as to mention giving out an award to people who do things without using their brain one iota. The "Galen" award is what I heard it described as. Well, I think I have your first candidate!



This is **Todd Cleveland Logging** working on a private patch near Harvard. Todd is totally mechanized with a feller buncher, a grapple D5 cat and a 518 grapple skidder. He also owns two stroke delimbers. The only hand falling occurs with the oversized trees. Obviously this makes for a very safe operation.

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